

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A gear made of resin, comprising a substantially cylindrical rim having a plurality of teeth formed around an outer periphery thereof with each of said plurality of teeth having front and rear facing surfaces and a top, a boss formed about a rotational center of said rim, and a web connecting said boss and said rim to each other, wherein at least one groove is defined along an entire outer peripheral surface of each tooth of said teeth, said at least one groove being provided in said outer peripheral surface of each of said front and rear facing surfaces and said top of each of said plurality of teeth and in a valley provided between each successive ones of said plurality of teeth, said at least one groove defining at least a central gear portion and at least two outer gear portions wherein said central gear portion comprises central gear teeth smaller than outer gear teeth of said two outer gear portions.

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (previously presented): The gear of claim 1, wherein the groove is formed at substantially the center in the widthwise direction of the teeth.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The gear of claim 1, wherein a plurality of said grooves are provided along the outer surface of the teeth.